

4TH AUGUST 1957

4TH PEOPLE'S ACTION PARTY CONFERENCE AT BADMINTON HALL

The year ahead is the most vital in the history of our Party. The new Central Executive Committee will be responsible for seeing that the aims of the party and the interests of the people are advanced in the City Council election, the District Council Elections, and the most important of all the Legislative Assembly elections.

Next year's general elections will be held in Singapore under the new constitution giving Singapore internal self government. And on August 31st, the Federation of Malaya will be independent. The fight for political independence of the Federation would be over although the fight for economic independence will only just begin. Never before therefore, has it been more important for us to re-state our aims clearly and to explain to our members and supporters our attitude towards the democratic system which will be set up.

In the Tanjong Pagar by-elections in June the party fought on the following issues:-

Immediate: accept new constitution; reject clause 30 against subversives.

Long Term: Independent, democratic, non-Communist,  
Socialist Malaya.

The party won the by-election by a overwhelming majority. The party explained in pamphlets and at mass meetings why the proposed new constitution should be accepted as a stepping stone towards merger and independence and why the anti-subversion clause should be rejected. We restated our long term objectives.

We explained that the right policy to get Merdeka for Singapore is through merger with the Federation. Then we could establish a democratic system of Government in an independent Malaya. We believe in the democratic system where (1) there are free elections (2) on the secret ballot (3) every five years, and that at such elections, the people of Malaya shall decide which political party shall govern the country during a term of five years.

We believe that within this democratic frame-work of free, peaceful and constitutional competition between political parties and policies the P.A.P. will be able to establish a socialist society, a society where man does not exploit his fellow man.

In our ultimate objectives, the creation of a socialist society, the P.A.P. does not differ from the Malayan Communist Party. But we differ from the Communists in methods. We believe in peaceful constitutional methods. We do not believe in the dictatorship of any party or group.

In the multi-racial society of Malaya where there are three major races living side by side, the dictatorship of any one party, particularly when it is a party composed predominantly of one race, may bring about a disastrous race conflict.

There may be some people who think that the P.A.P. is a Communist front

organisation. Let us say this. The P.A.P. stands for the aims and objectives of the P.A.P. and not for those of any other political party. The P.A.P. believes in a

independent, democratic, non-Communist Malaya. A democratic Malaya which will allow the various political attitudes of the different races to find a common equilibrium, and so make possible the establishment of a socialist society by peaceful and constitutional means.

Some of the members have said that the P.A.P.'s aims as printed does not contain the word "non-Communist". This is so. The printed aims of any political party must contain what it stands for and not what it does not stand for. It would normally be unnecessary, to state that we are a non-capitalist party, or a non-colonial party or a non-fascist party. But the Central Executive Committee found out, a few months after the formation of the Party, that some persons had mistaken the Party for a Communist Front organisation. Hence at the first anniversary meeting of the Party in November 1955, we published our stand in our souvenir publication: "The P.A.P. was formed with the object of rallying the forces which are striving for independence. It is the vehicle for all those who seek to build a free and democratic Malaya. We do not want a colonial Malaya, because we do not want a subject Malaya whose natural resources are developed for the benefit of the British investor. We do not want a Communist Malaya because we do not want a one party state. We want an independent democratic Malaya where all political faith and ideologies can be freely preached so long as it is done peacefully and constitutionally"... "We in the P.A.P. believe that is the best way for us; an independent, democratic, non-Communist Malaya".

In the past few weeks the Central Executive Committee has met every branch committee in turn. A few Branch Committee members have said that the phrase might create misunderstanding in that non-Communist might mean anti-Communist.

A few say that the time has not come in our struggle against colonialism for us to define whether we want to create a Communist or non-Communist system after independence. But the Central Executive Committee considers that it is vital to clarify our stand now. We want to create a democratic system of government after independence. We do not want the dictatorship of military or feudalist or capitalist elements. Nor do we want the dictatorship of the Communist Party. If the Communist Party, as in India, does not adopt armed or unconstitutional methods, then they should be allowed to compete within the democratic system. But such competition must be for the purpose of making the democratic system work, not for the purpose of destroying it and setting up a dictatorship.

Eight members of the retiring Central Executive Committee have been closely associated with this policy. They are:-

(1) Ahmad bin Ibrahim (2) Goh Chew Chua (3) Haron bin Kassim

(4) Ismail Rahim (5) Lee Kuan Yew (6) Ong Eng Guan (7) Tann Wee Tiong and (8) Toh Chin Chye.

Unfortunately I hear that some members in the branches who are opposed to this policy of the Central Executive Committee have recently carried on a systematic smear campaign of personal attacks against four of the 8 of us, namely, Ong Eng Guan, Ismail Rahim, Tann Wee Tiong and Haron bin Kassim. Those who carry out

this form of party struggle in order to split the collective leadership of the party, are undermining the party. These four persons have proved their loyalty to the party for a long time. Three of them have been on the Executive Committee since the formation of the party.

We the 8 members of the retiring Central Executive Committee whose names are placed at the bottom of the ballot paper, offer ourselves to stand for re-election only if this resolution is supported by the Party membership. We shall not stand for re-election if the party membership votes against the resolution. If a member is against this resolution then vote for the eight persons en bloc to be in the Committee to re-organize the Party to carry out the Party's policy more effectively. We must expose and oppose all attempts to split the collective leadership of the party by unprincipled personal attacks. Party unity and solidarity is essential to build up the organisational strength of the party to face the tasks in the year ahead. The

Constitution of the Party may have to be amended to achieve this. But most important of all is a strong Central Executive Committee with loyalties to the P.A.P. tested in the course of the Party's struggles to carry out the immense responsibilities ahead.

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